

## Notes on Odonata from the Eastern Cape Province

By L. P. HERSALEK

For the past two years the writer has been observing and collecting dragonflies during the years 1967 and 1968. All collecting and recording was performed in the Eastern Cape Province and particularly in the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage area. The chief rivers investigated in this area were: the Van Stadens River, which runs at places through a very steep rocky gorge and also through forested districts; the Swartkops River; Maitland River; Baakens River and the Brak River. Other small streams were investigated, but their presence during some months of the year is totally absent due to their drying up and are consequently nameless.

I should put the number of species of Odonata occurring in the Eastern Cape Province as slightly over fifty, though Per Brink, writing in "South African Animal Life", Vol. II (as a result of the Lund University Expedition to South Africa in 1950-51, only recorded forty-three. To these forty-three I have added a further 6 species unrecorded by the Lund University Expedition; and they will be dealt with below:

(All species dealt with taken during October, December or January.)  
*Diplocodes lefeburei* Ramb.

This small black Libellulid has not, according to "Dragonflies of Southern Africa" by Elliot Pinhey been recorded in the Cape Province, though it does occur in Natal and warm localities. I found the species at the Swartkops River near Despatch (just outside Uitenhage) in December 1967 and 1968. The dragonfly in the past two years inhabited the same reed-overgrown stagnant pools that lie just a few yards away from the main river. I found it to have a very quick and wary flight and very difficult to capture. The fact that this local species has occurred successively for two years increases the hope that it is breeding here.

### *Orthetrum abbotti* Calvert

A very small blue bodied libellulid compared to the other members, I found this species only a mile or two outside Port Elizabeth inhabiting a very reedy dried-up stream occurring in hilly surroundings. It was not difficult to take *abbotti* as it settled frequently near the tips of the reeds. Pinhey accounts for *abbotti*'s distribution as Cape to Kenya, but gives no localities for the former.

### *Hemnianax ephippiger* Burm.

A medium sized aeshnid. Again this species seems to inhabit warm localities and is not recorded by Pinhey in his distributions as occurring in the Cape. This dragonfly, with typical powerful easy flight of the *Aeshnidae* was caught by the writer at the same stagnant pools at Despatch as *Diplocodes lefeburei* Ramb, already dealt with earlier. Most prominent is the second abdominal sky-blue patch in the male which is quite visible from some distance.

### *Chlorolestes umbrata* Sélys

*C. umbrata* is a beautiful banded damselfly (synlestidae). The bands on the wings are of deep chocolate brown and white primrose. The dorsum of the thorax is also fully coated with blue pruinosity. A good

series of this species was taken along the Van Stadens River from the Van Stadens Pass (some 25 miles from P.E.) to Van Stadens Dam situated in hilly to mountain country. The damselfly tended to keep to very shaded areas of the river. Only the male is banded and I found it more numerous than the female.

*Agriocnemis exillis* Sélys

An extremely small damselfly, less than an inch in some cases. Pinhey does not record it at all from the Cape Province. I found it in large numbers, though locally gregarious in a rocky river bed amongst hills at Witteklip some 25 miles from P.E. west. The species tended to keep together amongst some very tall and thick reed-like canes near the river. They settled often, but the presence of the canes prevented easy collecting. Many *exillis* would rise at one's approach and filter between the reeds.

I might add that at this same river occurred another local species—*Metacnemis valida* Sélys—a robust blue damselfly that occurs only in rocky localities and settles on boulders and stones situated in the river or by the side.

*Pseudagrion angolense* Sélys

A black and orange species of damselfly that I found quite common in some areas, especially at the Van Stadens River (at the Pass) where it occurred quite freely just skimming across the water in a lazy fashion. Specimens were also noted at the Swartkops River.

The following species I found rare, local or common in the Eastern Cape Province:—

*Anax speratus* Hagen

This enormous *aeshnid* measuring some five inches or more has been found by the writer only at the Van Stadens Pass, and there only two or three occurred. It is an orange to brown-red species that like all *anax* hawkes up and down a stretch of water—now and then it will deviate from its path and soar high into the surrounding forest trees.

*Anax imperator* subsp. *mauricianus* Ramb.

The writer found this dragonfly fairly common in most areas. At one area *imperator* occurred only a few yards from the sea at the Maitland River Mouth.

*Lestes virgatus* Burm.

This brilliant green bodied damselfly the writer found only at the Brak River some 14 miles from Uitenhage—there it occurred in numbers, often choosing the shade of trees. *Virgatus* flew alongside specimens of *Lestes plagiatus* Burm, which I found common at Van Stadens River, Baakens River and localities in Grahamstown.

*Chlorolestes longicauda* Burm.

This metallic green *Synlestid* was found during October, December and January at Witteklip (a more or less mountainous district) from which the largest specimens were obtained, and some of these were beginning to show signs of the white pruinose bands that occur in this species during certain months—specimens also from Van Stadens Pass/River, Baakens River and Brak River.

*Allocnemis leucosticta* Sélys

An amber tinted winged species that inhabits, as I found, wooded and

shady areas near a river. At the Van Stadens Pass this species was present—also at the Baakens River and Witteklip.

*Trithemis kirbyi* Sélys subsp. *Ardens* Gerst.

A local fast flying libellulid. With a brilliant red body and large amber basal patches to the wings, this is an attractive species. Though far from common, I have noted it at the Swartkops River, Witteklip and Van Stadens River singly. I found it very alert and difficult to capture as it would settle on a projecting dead twig, wings projected down, ready to take off. As soon as one made a movement towards it, the dragonfly would then dart away.

*Crocothemis sanquinolenta* Burm.

A small broad-bodied red dragonfly which is locally common at the Van Stadens River. This species has a quick flight, and when settled, raises its abdomen high into the air which appears very un-dragonfly like. *Crocothemis erythraea* Brullé

Larger than *sanquinolenta*, broader in body, and more red coloured. Recorded at Despatch, Swartkops River and at the Baakens River, though not in many numbers.

*Chlorocypha fitzimonsi* Pinh. (Fam. CHLOROCYPHIDAE)

It is only recently, while inspecting my collection of Odonata, that I noticed amongst a series of *C. caligata* Sélys two specimens (♂ ♀) of *C. fitzimonsi* taken during June 1967 at the Van Stadens Pass, very near the same locality where *caligata* was collected. *Fitzimonsi*, I believe, is unrecorded from the Eastern Cape Province and is a recently described species (Pinhey 1950), occurring only in Natal (Pinhey "Dragonflies of Southern Africa").

There is no difficulty about telling *caligata* from *fitzimonsi* as the former has a brilliant sky-blue abdomen, the latter has the first six abdominal segments red; the last four being the same blue as *caligata*. Both species like to settle on rocks in midstream and on twigs or bushes near the river.

Finally, to end these notes, I have made a list of species of *Odonata* from the Eastern Cape Province. These species without localities are species recorded by Lund University Expedition (1950-51) or by Pinhey and as yet unrecorded by the writer from this province.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

V.S.R.	.....	Van Stadens River
V.S.P.	.....	Van Stadens Pass
Swart. R.	.....	Swartkops River
Wit.	.....	Witteklip
P.E.	.....	Port Elizabeth

#### Sub-Order ZYGOPTERA

#### Locality

#### Fam. SYNLESTIDAE

*Chlorolestes umbrata*

V.S.R.

*C. fasciata*

P.E., Hogsback Mts.

*C. longicanda*

Wit., V.S.R. and P., Baakens R.

*C. tessellata*

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#### Fam. LESTIDAE

*Lestes plagiatus*

Wit., V.S.R. and P., Grahamstown and Baakens R.



<i>L. virgatus</i>	Brak River only.
Fam. PROTONEURIDAE	
<i>Ellatoneura glauca</i>	V.S.P.
Fam. PLATYCNEMIDIDAE	
<i>Metacnemis valida</i>	Wit. only
<i>Allocnemis leucosticta</i>	V.S.R. and Wit.
Fam. COENAGRIIDAE	
<i>Ceriagrion glabrum</i>	Brak, Baakens, V.S.R., Wit. and Swart. R.
<i>Pseudagrion angolense</i>	V.S.R., Swart. R.
<i>P. citricola</i>	—
<i>P. kersteni</i>	Wit., V.S.R., Baakens R.
<i>P. massaicum</i>	Grahamstown
<i>P. natalense</i>	—
<i>P. salisburyense</i>	Grahamstown
<i>Ischnura senegalensis</i>	Maitland R., Brak R. and V.S.P.
<i>Enallagma glaucum</i>	Brak. R.
<i>Agriocnemis exilis</i>	Wit. only
Fam. CHLOROCYPHIDAE	
<i>Chlorocypha caligata</i>	V.S.P. only
<i>C. fitzimonsi</i>	V.S.P.
Sub-Order ANISOPTERA	
Fam. GOMPHIDAE	
<i>Notogomphus praetorius</i>	Wit.
<i>Paragamphus cognatus</i>	Grahamstown
<i>P. hageni</i>	—
<i>Ceratogomphus pictus</i>	V.S.R., Wit. and St. Albans
Fam. AESHNIDAE	
<i>Aeshna miniscula</i>	Grahamstown
<i>A. rileyi</i>	—
<i>Anax imperator</i>	
subsp. <i>mauricianus</i>	Brak R., Swart. R., St. Albans, P.E. and V.S.R.
<i>A. speratus</i>	V.S.P. only
<i>Hemianax ephippiger</i>	Swart. R. (Despatch) only.
Fam. CORDULIDAE	
<i>Phyllomacromia picta</i>	—
<i>P. sophia</i>	—
<i>P. tropicalis</i>	—
Fam. LIBELLULIDAE	
1. <i>Orthetrum abbotti</i>	P.E. only
2. <i>O. cafferum</i>	V.S.R.
3. <i>O. chrysostigma</i>	Wit. and Swart. R.
4. <i>O. farinosum</i>	Baakens R., V.S.P. and Brak. R.
5. <i>O. stemmale</i> subsp. <i>cupense</i>	Wit., V.S.P. and Swart. R.
6. <i>Palpopleura jacunda</i>	—
7. <i>Diplocodes lefeburei</i>	Swart, R. (Despatch) only
8. <i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>	Swart, R. and Baakens R.
9. <i>Crocothemis sanquinolenta</i>	V.S.R.
10. <i>Sympetrum fanscolombei</i>	Wit., St. Albans and Swart. R.
11. <i>Trithemis arteriosa</i>	Common everywhere

12. <i>T. kirbyi</i> subsp. <i>ardens</i>	Wit., V.S.R. and Swart. R.
13. <i>T. risi</i>	Brak R., V.S.R. and Wit.
14. <i>T. doralis</i>	Wit.
15. <i>T. stictica</i>	V.S.R., Swart. R. and Brak R.
16. <i>Zygonyx torrida</i>	—
17. <i>Pantia flavescens</i>	St Albans, Wit.
Total: 49 species	

## REFERENCES

- Pinhey, Eliot. 1948. *Dragonflies of Southern Africa*. Transvaal Museum, Pretoria.
- Brink, Per. 1950-51. *South African Animal Life*. Vol. II. Cape Town.
- Longfield, Cynthia. 1949 (revised). *Dragonflies of the British Isles*. London. Willowdene, P.O. St. Albans, dist., Port Elizabeth, C.P., South Africa.

## Notes and Observations

TEICHOBIA FILICIVORA MEYRICK FEEDING IN HARTSTONGUE FERN.—I had a similar experience to that of Mr. R. Fairclough (Ent. Rec. 81: 63). In May 1968 a party of microlepidopterists, which included Mr. Fairclough, visited Portland, and some of us collected fronds of hartstongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium* (L) Newman) for *Teichobia verhuellella* Staint. From the leaves I picked I had five *verhuellella* between the 14th and 20th of June and one *T. filicivora* on the 19th June. I rather think I included this unexpected record in the account we wrote of our Portland visit for the Proceedings and Transactions of the British Entomological and Natural History Society, but added it after Mr. Fairclough had seen the MS; this report is still to be published. These two independent records from different counties establish beyond question that hartstongue is an alternative foodplant of *T. filicivora*. — A. M. EMMET, Labrey Cottage, Victoria Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex. 23.iii.1969.

SOME EARLY AND LATE LEPIDOPTERA. — On 28th March 1968, a single specimen of *Spilosoma lubricipeda* L. was taken in the Rothamsted light trap at Alice Holt, Hampshire. This year a further exceptionally early occurrence was a single *Lithosia lurideola* Zinck. taken on 11th February.

During the past three months there have been several late records of micros at light, notably *Crambus tristellus* Schiff. and several species of *Acleris*, details of which are given in chronological order below. In each case the record is of a single, male specimen:—26th November 1968: *Acleris rhombana* Schiff.; 20th December 1968: *Crambus tristellus* Schiff.; 10th January 1969: *Acleris rhombana* Schiff.; 22nd January 1969: *A. ferrugana* Schiff.; 23rd January 1969: *A. ferrugana* Schiff. and *A. tripunctulana* Haw.; 24th/25th January 1969: *A. ferrugana* Schiff. and *A. tripunctulana* Haw. It may also be of interest to record that a single *Vanessa atalanta* L. was observed by Mr. C. Walker flying in bright sunshine at Frensham Great Pond, near Farnham, Surrey, on the afternoon of 21st December 1968.—T. G. WINTER, Entomology Section, Forestry Commission Research Station, Alice Holt Lodge, Nr. Farnham, Surrey. 6.iii.69.